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Harrisonburg Police Department Announces Selection of Three Captains

Harrisonburg, Va. – The Harrisonburg Police Department (HPD) has selected Chris Watson, Evan Keirce and Lisa Best to serve as captains after a highly competitive recruitment process that included both internal and external candidates.

Watson is now serving as the Criminal Investigations Division captain and began his tenure on June 22. Watson has been with the HPD since 2002. He has served a variety of roles in the department, and most recently was acting administrative division captain. He spent most of his career in the R.U.S.H. Drug Task Force, working to identify, target, investigate and prosecute individuals and organizations that distribute and/or manufacture quantities of narcotics in the Harrisonburg and Rockingham County area.

Watson has served in a variety of specialties, including K9, Honor Guard commander, Bike Patrol and field training officer. He completed the National Criminal Justice Command College (NCJCC) through the University of Virginia, completed the FBI-LEEDA Trilogy, and is a DCJS Certified General Instructor.

Keirce assumed the role of Administrative Division captain on June 22. Keirce began his law enforcement career at HPD in 2017 after graduating from JMU with a degree in criminology. He spent a majority of his career on night shift patrol as an officer and field training officer then as a sergeant before being selected as the Professional Standards supervisor in 2024.

He has been a member of the Special Weapons and tactics (S.W.A.T.) Team for seven years, a member of the Forensic Evidence Team, and is a DCJS certified firearms instructor, defensive tactics instructor, and Combined Tactical Systems (CTS) less lethal impact and chemical munitions instructor.

Best has been selected as Patrol Operations captain. Best will be joining from the Charlottesville Police Department beginning July 6. Her public service career began in the United States Army, where she served as a military police officer before receiving an honorable discharge. She began her law enforcement career in 2001 with the Charlottesville Police Department. She served as a patrol officer

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early in her career before being selected for assignment to the Jefferson Area Drug Enforcement (JADE) Task Force, where she worked as an undercover narcotics investigator.

She was promoted to sergeant, serving as supervisor of both the midnight and evening patrol shifts, and later promoted to lieutenant, where she commanded the evening patrol bureau and the department's Field Training Officer Program. She is a graduate of The School of Executive Leadership, from the Center for American and International Law, Institute for Law Enforcement Administration in Plano Texas.

"Our ideal candidate for captain was a visionary and strategic leader - a forward-thinking professional who can anticipate emerging public safety needs and translate long-term goals into consistent, high-quality operational performance," Police Chief Joe Tucker said. "These three individuals reflect the values of the department, and each bring their own unique experiences that will ensure we are providing the best service to our community and advancing our own department in a rapidly changing public safety environment."

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